DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 319 272 HE 023 050

AUTHOR	Conn, Robert H.
TITLE	Rear Guard on the Escalator: The Struggle To Protect the Liberal Arts Core in Higher Education. Occasional Papers, No. 80.
SPONS AGENCY	United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Nashville, Tenn.
PUB DATE	20 Oct 89
NOTE	13p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Board of Higher Education and Ministry, The United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 871, Nashville, TN 37202 (free).
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Career Education; *Church Related Colleges; *Core Curriculum; *Curriculum Development; Educational Change; Educational Philosophy; Futures (of Society); General Education; Higher Education; Humanistic Education; Influences; *Integrated Activities; Interdisciplinary Approach; *Liberal Arts; Private Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	Methodist Church

ABSTRACT

The debate about the core content of liberal arts education may have become irrelevant, as interrelated factors could turn the future increasingly toward career education: (1) demographics force colleges to continue their search for older and nontraditional students, who enroll in college largely for career education; (2) college finances will depend increasingly upon marketing education to nontraditional students; (3) the interests of students lead them to professional training; (4) certification or credentialing groups exert strong controls over curriculum; (5) colleges function more like corporations, with individual departments having limited spheres of influence; and (6) faculty seem often not to embody the best results of liberal learning. Those who care about liberal learning are encouraged to demonstrate the unity of learning by integrating liberal arts core content and career education. Humane learning should infuse three items into all career training--it should internationalize, moralize, and historicize. The church can make three contributions in career-bound institutions: the church can transform the quest for occupation into the discovery of vocation; the church can reveal the world's stories and teach its own counter stories; and the church can encourage college administrators, faculty, and students through spreading the New Testament gospel. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED319272

ISSUED BY THE UNITED METHODIST BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND MINISTRY

occasional PAPERS

No. 80, October 20, 1989

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Robert H. Conn

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Rear Guard On The Escalator: The Struggle To Protect The Liberal Arts Core In Higher Education

by Robert H. Conn

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

The news from Stanford University has made many people into instant experts on curriculum—at least if holding an opinion is the measurement of expertise. When Stanford announced its intention to broaden its core curriculum to include works from nonwestern, feminist, and ethnic minority authors, it sprung loose sharp, sometimes vicious responses from the otherwise softly focused community of educators. Stanford was accused of politicizing its curriculum, of trivializing it, or of capitulating to critics of the western world and its ways.

Stanford, for its part, defended its decision by pointing out the benefits to students of knowing the fuller world in which they live. The real world is vaster than the western world. Real wisdom is vaster than the pool of western wisdom.

The arguments on both sides presume the real issue to be the content of the core of liberal learning. None doubts the importance of having a core.

Discussions of the core presume that some selection from the world's wisdom must grace the brain of any person worth calling liberally (truly?) educated. From within that presumption the debate about what constitutes wisdom and whose wisdom really matters has power and legitimacy.

But one can raise a larger question. Do we need a liberal arts core, a canon? And another question might follow, although it is frighteningly pragmatic. Does the core really work? And an even more frightening question might follow that. Does the core pay the bills?

For church-related higher education, negative answers to those questions could seem quite dire. Church-related colleges have, in many cases, hung their claim to distinctiveness on the peg of liberal arts education. For them, the questions just raised are heavily freighted with significance.

Those questions will inspire a good deal of debate. However, they may not need to. History could be on its way toward handling them for us. Around us now are several indications that the ground is shifting under the debate about the core—making the outcome not so much uninteresting as possibly irrelevant.[1] The debate over the liberal arts core may have become a

HE 023 050

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

rear guard action while the escalator of history bears us inexorably into a different time and place.

If that is true, it certainly bumps the debaters off the track of currency. And it pushes church-related higher education into a different realm of justification. Fortunately, neither result is fatal. And, in fact, they both may give fresh incentives and focus to the church's ministry in higher education on private and public campuses.

Where Are We Going, Or Being Taken?

Several streams are now converging in higher education. Those converging streams share a common characteristic—their currents rush the pace toward overt career training in colleges. Together they make it easier to pass the traditional liberal arts core by with little notice.

If that is correct, then, despite the claim of canonical defenders that liberal arts is the best form of career training, students will see liberal studies as a detour. And colleges, with the expected high rate of competition for students, may have to agree with them if they want their tuition money.

Here are six interrelated factors that could turn the future increasingly toward career education.

1. Demographics will force colleges to continue their search for older and nontraditional students. Nineteen eighty-nine's high school graduates are the last bumper crop until near the end of the century. The class of 1989 had 2.8 million graduates. The class of 1993 will shrink by 300,000.

Roughly half of each high school graduating class goes directly on to college. They make up a large percentage of the full-time residential student body. Bear in mind that the present undergraduate enrollment in college is 11.3 million, and you can see that the already large group of older and nontraditional students will have to become even larger if college enrollments are to hold their own. Indeed, projections are for a decrease of 200,000 full-time students and an increase of 130,000 part-time by 1993.[2]

Why is that important? Because those who return to college after being in the work force return largely for career, credential, professional and, in some cases, preprofessional education. They want classes that will prepare them for employment.

Examine the enrollments of colleges and see how often this pattern appears. Residential enrollment of traditional students has grown slightly. Weekend college, night classes, and continuing education have grown rapidly—providing, by the way, jobs for large numbers of part-time faculty and giving full-time faculty welcome teaching overloads that increase their modest incomes.

Those nonresidential, nontraditional students are older and career oriented. Is there any reason to think that next year's group will be any different?

2. College finances will depend increasingly upon marketing education to nontraditional students. While the rhetoric of small colleges especially makes one think of a medieval castle—a center manse in which dwell the arts and wisdom of culture, a surrounding terrain inhabited by humble peasants and craftsmen depending upon the manse—the reality is otherwise. Liberal arts seems more like a small ship buffeted by wind, water, and weather, and held in place by ropes tying it to the docks where longshoremen principally occupy themselves with moving the goods for the commerce of the day.

Colleges rely more and more upon the economy of professional education. They sell those classes at odd hours (evenings and weekends), filling otherwise empty classrooms. The administrative costs are relatively low, because odd-hour professional students require fewer of the traditional services. And teaching costs remain low, depending as they do upon overloaded or part-time teachers. The strain on college facilities, other than parking lots, is minimal.

Apart from innovative ways of marketing professional education, many colleges might already have undergone severe faculty cutbacks. Indeed, the continued employment of humanities faculties may well come to depend upon the income generated by career and professional curricula. One often hears humanities faculty complaining about becoming a service staff to the professional schools. The alternative, perhaps, is worse: unemployment.

3. The interests, even of traditional age students, lead them to professional training. They want jobs. While their schedules make them more amenable to required core courses, even more appreciative of them, they show befuddlement when asked why they think they are required to take them.

The lack of student incentive for core courses has brought some colleges to make the core offerings so vast as to be a blur.[3] What doth it profit a man (or woman) if he (she) takes twenty hours from a list of sixty options in a range of thirty curricular areas? On the other hand, what does it profit a person who takes twelve required courses from professors who never talk to each other?

This is not to gainsay the obvious joy with which some students discover art, or history, or poetry, or science. It is to register two concerns, however. For one, the liberal curriculum lies remote from the perceived interests of many of the young. They trek through it desultorily at best. Core classes get squeezed into the interstices between "important" classes—thin leaves of learning stuck between large slices of professional training.

For another, core education often is done haphazardly. If competition means anything, our students score poorly on science and math tests in comparison with students from the other developed countries. Their knowledge of foreign languages hovers somewhere between naught and nil. Their literary acumen extends from Garfield to Tom Clancy, and their familiarity with art and music probably underperforms a German sixth grader's.

How long can it be until their low interest and our low performance simply render the enterprise ludicrous?

4. Certification or credentialing groups exert strong controls over curriculum. Those colleges seeking to be approved by secondary education societies, or by nursing boards, or by associations for music, engineering, or business education, know the fast grip those groups have on their curriculum. If a college recruits by flaunting all of the organizations that have accredited it, it probably represses the degree of control it has lost over its teaching to those accrediting agencies.

For colleges with one- and two-year certification programs, the problem is more severe. In those cases, nearly all of the class work fulfills association-mandated requirements for the career, and much time is given to laboratory or on-the-job training.

In some cases, colleges have added their own flourishes to a credentialing program. They may, for instance, create a bachelor's degree in nursing by adding one or two years to the training cycle for registered nurses. That has won its share of advocates. It is not clear that it has won and will continue to win its share of students.

5. Colleges themselves are tending to look more like corporations. Measured by growth in size of staff or by salaries paid, administration has assumed greater bulk in college life.[4] Along with that, administrative and corporate language has become the common lingo of the college. Nearly everyone talks easily of bottom lines, cost effectiveness, employee relations, personnel matters, institutional research, data control, strategic planning.

And, true to its corporate model, the college has become a loosely related group of departments (or divisions) linked together by the administration. Decisions are made through the administration. The departments, having less and less to do with each other, actually force the administration to assume greater responsibility and control.

The gradual disappearance of the faculty as a body consistently responsible for curriculum is one index of this. The general atomization of faculty members, or their department-limited spheres of influence, is another.

By example, if not by precept, colleges teach the value of professionalism. They look like the corporations students hope to enter. They talk the same language. In that setting, literature may seem ornamental, and history decorative, while those who know the lexicon and the skills of corporate America appear to speak the plain and productive truth.

6. Faculty seem often not to embody the best results of liberal learning. Among faculty, one finds a curious lack of curiosity about areas of learning outside of one's own discipline. The scant interest in interdisciplinary courses may be a symptom of this deeper malaise. Historians don't know math. Philosophers don't know science. Teachers of literature don't know economics. Nor have they much curiosity.

Asked about the limited scope of their interests, professors will explain that they have large class loads, that their disciplines demand full-time inquiry, that they are expected to write articles in order to get tenure and that requires specialization, that they weren't hired to be amateurs in other disciplines, and more. All of which may be true. But it presents a picture of yet another narrowly educated person who limits learning to the confines of what the job requires.

All of these factors make the pull of professional education difficult to resist. That doesn't mean that every college will change. Some will hold out. A few have sufficient prestige, and sufficient endowment, to allow them to do what they want. Others will tend to recruit students whose futures are made secure by their family's wealth, and who, therefore, could take anything from Renaissance history to the proverbial course in basket-weaving without any occupational risk. Yet others will continue with a traditional liberal arts education out of commitment, and by good marketing and the obscure laws of averages do both good and well.

But many will eventually recognize a crossroad. They may see it behind them, discovering it only after they have gone beyond. They will discover that they are occupational and professional educators. For them, the question of liberal learning will either evaporate or have to assume a different guise. It is in the service of that second possibility that the rest of this paper is offered.

Recrafting Career Education

Let us assume that liberal learning can assume a different guise. Let's assume, further, that the energy toward career education will not spend itself out in the near future. And let's also assume that colleges, in order to survive, will have to market professional education even more vigorously in the future. What should those who care about liberal learning do?

That, of course, concerns everyone. But it especially concerns leaders of church-related higher education. What should they work for in the two arenas of their ministry in higher education—church-related colleges and campus ministries on public campuses?

Here are two answers to consider. One has to do with what might be offered on any and every campus. It looks at what the church as citizen ought to desire for all who are in training to be leaders of the citizenry. The other has to do with the church's distinctive task in higher learning.

First, what might we as citizens desire for the curriculum of any and all higher education? The answer to that is not more core courses. One widely acknowledged problem with colleges today is their rigid compartmentalization. The core often emphasizes rather than overcomes that problem. By marching students from one department to another, it reinforces the evidence that separation, specialization, and professionalization are the rule rather than the exception. We may think that the core overcomes compartmentalization. But the medium is the message, and the message is specialization and highly focused career interests among professors as among others.

If we wish to demonstrate the relevance, or the beauty, of liberal learning, we should show it as part of the unity of life and work.[5] That challenges us not to run people through the balkanized components of a core, but to demonstrate the unity of learning by integrating core and career. That doesn't mean to abolish the humanities. They should continue to bid with the others for the best and brightest students. It does mean that our notion of career expands.

The word *career* comes from a root that means "to move." It came to mean a road, then a race track, and finally one's progress along the track. It relates to our words *car* and *carriage*. One's career is one's carriage. It may be better not to ask how many stops the carriage can make, but what should be gotten into it for the trip.

Those interested in humane learning should seek to have at least three items infused into all career training. The stress presses on the word *infused*. This is not an appeal for extra courses, but for a way to teach all professional courses. It should go without saying that this implies an interdisciplinary approach to learning.

Career education ought to be internationalized. We may talk about the global context, but we educate people mainly for their limited national neighborhoods. Few professional graduates know foreign languages, although they will, in the future, live in the cross currents of foreign competition. The economies of other nations remain a mystery to those whose work will see dollars, marks, rubles, and yens transform dizzily into one another.

The actions of fundamentalist Islamic sects and the strife caused by religious conflict in other countries take the U.S. by surprise. Yet they have profound effects on business, law, engineering, international banking, and more.

The case for internationalizing career training seems unexceptionable. How can one practice a career, ride a carriage, with no knowledge of the terrain?

It would help if the liberal arts bias about how to study other cultures could be overcome. That bias often assumes that art, religion, history, or kinship patterns express what counts as a country's true culture. But business practices also express a culture. They may even offer the keenest of insights into the presumptions of other people. Looking at Japan and Iran through the lens of business could reveal meanings of religion and family not so evident to the more

classical approaches. Certainly studying religion in the U.S through the lens of communication technology would open fresh if not alarming revelations.

This is not an argument for special classes, for example, in "international aspects of engineering" or "accounting in a global economy." It is a call for classes to routinely contain international information, for a global textbook. It calls both for interdisciplinary teaching and for a faculty that exemplifies liberal learning.

Career education ought to be moralized. At a minimum, students ought to know that no career is a value neutral operation. Every business, service, and product presumes a view about people, nations, and ecology. The narrow focus on economic value and cost effectiveness needs placing in the broader setting of value measured by a view of humankind.

One might respond to this by saying that colleges shouldn't teach sectarian values. But that rebuttal is rebarbative and regressive. It is rebarbative because it attempts to suppress what nearly everyone knows by now: nothing is value neutral. It is regressive because it denies what the newspapers show every day: business leaders, lawyers, researchers, and others have flouted the law and violated the most elementary rules of moral and ecological decency.

One does not have to look far to find moral dilemmas in business. Corporate buy-outs force value decisions between greater economy for the business and job security for the employees. The manufacture of goods requiring hazardous materials forces the question of cost to the public for disposal versus cost to the company for cleanup. That spreads quickly into issues of morality in the international arena. Witness, for example, the further discussion about hazardous wastes, and whose county, state, or country might have the dubious privilege of storing them. And, of course, we have known for years the problems of third world countries that become dependent upon the economically privileged countries of the world: mono-crop farming, cash-crop economies, overly specialized manufacturing, high indebtedness—the list goes on.

The moral issues in law, as evidenced by that swarm of lawyers who make up state and federal legislatures, hardly need reciting. Nor do the unsettling choices made by health care professionals. Community planners, developers, and designers have created an urban sprawl, decorating the landscape with fast food restaurants and the slow walking and hungry homeless. Researchers in biology or physics have seen their products explode and exploit others. Engineers, in concert with others, have spread highways over rich farm land and strung the skies with power lines like spider webs spanning the U.S. landscape. Money managers have sent savings and loans institutions into outrageous insolvency, and raided the taxpayers' pocketbooks to cover their losses. Professional education boils with moral concerns. If professors think they cannot advocate for a point of view, the net result is an argument for the point of view of indifference.

Why should anyone come out of a professional education without knowing the social, political, personal, and global consequences of the choice to enter that profession? Why should anyone presume to be an adequate teacher who has no skill or interest in the morality of what is taught? If nothing else, surely everyone could agree with the maxim of medical science: at the least, do no harm.

Career education ought to be historicized. Businesses and careers are anchored in history; history changes, and so will careers. That is one angle—because employment conditions will change, one should be equipped for lifelong learning. That is a tall-enough order for a nation that puts 1.5 million functional illiterates into its work force every year, and has to find room to employ a half million immigrants. But that isn't the reason to historicize.

To historicize is to learn about the rise and fall of everything, the roots of change, the difference between what happens and the stories that are told about what happened. It is to learn to see the stories professionals tell about themselves as time-bound, relative, and incomplete. To put it biblically, it is to know that the golden calves we worship are made of melted earrings and bracelets, and will soon dissolve into something else equally as cosmetic.

One reason large businesses can become so imperious is the temptation to treat their self-created success stories as eternal truths—a recipe for transforming success into sclerosis. Even when businesses try to loosen up, they may remain historically fixed because of the difficulty of changing the stories and images executives have of themselves.

Professors transfix themselves on the same stake. Their intellectual specialities remain quite stable. They may grow some within their disciplines—although the temptation to stagnate within a particular school of thought ought to be made more luridly visible than it is—but their view of what it means to be professors remains relatively fixed. As a group, they frown upon scholars who write for a popular audience. Inside the academy, they take interdisciplinary teaching as less than serious.

Physicians have been quick to accept the changes that have accompanied becoming medical businessmen. But larger patterns of privilege and protection have gone unquestioned. They are assumed prerogatives.

When professions are historicized, they reveal the relativity of their claims. They also reveal what otherwise might be repressed. Knowing about the evolution of the legal profession might leave us less surprised about the behavior of some lawyers. Studying the behavior of physicians and other intellectuals in Nazi Germany might show the opportunism that lies so close behind the Hippocratic oath.

Historicizing, however, is not equivalent to debunking; although it may have something in common with it. It is a genuine attempt to root professions in human culture. It exposes pretensions, but in the service of surfacing possibilities for more humble and humane service.

No career is without a culture. No culture is without its history. Those who teach must know those elements of the teaching profession and of the profession for which they teach. When they immerse their teaching in those histories, they create the conditions for freedom in their students—at least if we can believe what we have been taught: you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.

Internationalize, moralize, historicize—do these, not in addition to, but within career education. They will draw the resources of liberal learning into the professions. And, placed where they will affect careers, they may helpfully defeat the charge that the humanities neither humanize nor the liberal arts liberate the human spirit.

The Church's Contribution to Higher Education

The question raised above was: What should those who care for liberal learning work toward in colleges? The church, in common with all citizens, seeks a humane approach to careers. That springs from the depth of its humanism.

But the church has also special tasks, springing from its peculiar historic and mythic commitments. These shape its ministry in its own institutions and on public campuses. They are not meant to displace the more public concern for internationalism, morality, or history. They, instead, add (from the church's point of view) necessary increments to them.

What are the church's peculiar tasks in a day when professional training lures students and supports colleges? A first answer is negative: the church does not need to defend the liberal arts or the core curriculum. Colleges, instead, ought to ask about their commitment to any specific formulation of curriculum. That, too, should be internationalized, moralized, and historicized. This, however, is not the place for that adventure.

Instead, consider three positive contributions the church can make to faculty and students in a career-bound institution.

First, the church must transform the quest for occupation into the discovery of vocation. Given the career interests of nearly everyone in college, the church begins with what persons want to be—guiding them toward what they are called to be.

The church teaches persons to listen. Occupation is a matter of the will. The very word has aggressive military and sexual connotations. By force of will one occupies another's land, another's self. Vocation is a matter of the ear. One hears what one is called to be. It is to hear what this globe, this nation, this church are called to be. It is to hear one's own name in the midst of those calls.

The call, then, has two aspects. One is the urging under which this time is placed. What is it to be? What must it overcome? Who must be set free? Where is there to be laughter?

The other aspect is the alluring hearing of one's own name, whispered in the midst of that urging. It is not a generic call. Vocation is the poetry of personal address. Here, now, your name sounds.

The church that has campuses or works on them does not begin by denying anyone's chosen occupation. It does not deny natural gifts or inclinations. It meets persons through their occupational interest and leads them into the arena of vocation.

An example comes to mind quickly. It is the chaplaincy program at DePauw University. There the chaplain draws people into his program using a very simple principle: use your talents and interests for larger purposes. Engineering students help restore and repair dwellings. Medical students help deliver vital services to the poor. Fraternities and sororities take on special projects. Students and faculty bend their career and other abilities in the direction of compassionate service. There they experience the world, and see what it is and something of what it could become. As that urging reaches them, they stand on ground where they may hear the whispered call of vocation. They hear their own name.

The second task of the church complements and continues the first. To listen through one's occupation and hear one's vocation—it may start there. But then, one must listen through one's vocation to hear about one's preoccupation with this world. What are the stories that guide our lives? How do they bind us to the world? To what kind of world do they bind us?

The task of the church is both to reveal the world's stories, and to teach its own counter stories. One way to learn to discern the stories of the world is by hearing the stories colleges tell about themselves. For example, some universities with large pretensions tell stories like this about themselves: "We don't coddle students here. They have to learn responsibility and independence. Those who aren't serious either learn or leave. This is not high school."

Those who survive keep that story alive. It becomes their story. It justifies one's own indifference. It justifies bureaucratic indifference. It keeps the road to Jericho littered with the corpses of persons who could not take care of themselves.

It justifies the bureaucratic penchant for holding on to what it has, and to blaming the victims for what happens.

By contrast, the church teaches a counter story. Perhaps it is the one about a man who owned a hundred sheep. When one went astray, he left the ninety-nine behind on the mountain side to search for it. In Jesus' words, "I tell you there was more joy over the one who was lost and was found than over the ninety-nine who had never gone astray."

This is a small tale about what one dares to leave behind. What keeps us on the mountain side with the ninety-nine? What do we dare to leave behind? Bureaucratic privilege? Stories that make a virtue of one's aloofness?

The larger story of our culture is one of accumulation. Accumulate credits. Accumulate experience. Accumulate capital. Accumulate reputation. We tell stories about what we have. The church tells a small tale about what one is willing to leave behind.

That is not an absolute tale. It ought not be universalized to make the moral point that everything ought to be left behind. It does not cancel our cultural tales. It relativizes them. It shows other stories, and by doing so, it shows that what our culture teaches is a story as well. In the words of philosopher Richard Rorty, it shows that everything is susceptible to redescription, and awakens questions about why one description has the privilege of power over the present.

The church preserves counter stories. Not only do they keep the culture loose and fluid. They also become a means for hearing the vocational call. Not only in the wooden debris of slum home repair, but in the shock of a counter story, persons may hear their own name.

The third task of the church is encouragement. That may seem a small thing. But if you have been with college administrators, faculty, and students much during the past years, you know that the gloom index can reach quite high. Students who are polled have conflicting expectations: they anticipate good jobs along with a worse global economy. Faculty in many places feel their power to shape their environment subsiding. Administrators worry over demographics and finances, and feel as unsteady as a half-trained Indian fakir walking for the first time over a bed of nails. They think they know how it is supposed to go, but what if they're wrong?

At the root of the word encouragement is the French word *cour* from the Latin word *cor*. They both mean heart. The church is on campus to give heart to persons.

That extends beyond the usual task of binding up the wounded and propping up the sagging self-images of the also-rans. It has to do also with those whose commitments to justice are now only halfhearted. Exercising justice is good for their hearts. The church encourages them.

But it has its mundane aspects. The church's first message on campus is good news to persons in their own plights and tasks. Before the word of moral surgery, before the scrutiny of records and behaviors, the church speaks its confidence that persons are capable of good. Before it searches the shadow sides of one's life, it speaks its hope that the shadows that darken one's life will be lifted. Always its poetry promises that we can be something more and better for each other.

That accords with the English word chosen for the first four books of the New Testament: *gospel*—God's spell. *Spell* is a wonderfully rich word. It refers to the laborious etching of letters on pages; then to the length of time it takes to do it—hence a "spell of time." It refers to the result of that effort, when something is finally written; as we say when we want an

explanation, "Spell it out!" But it also refers to the mysteries encoded in words and used by druids, magicians, and necromancers—the very sounds they use to cast their spells.

The gospel contains the spell the church wishes to cast upon the earth. The church speaks its strange words, haunts the world with them, to capture both hearts and wits. Within those words there lie in wait the powers that give persons courage to be more and better for each other.

One captures the sense of that in W. H. Auden's words about William Butler Yeats.[6]

Follow, poet, follow right
To the bottom of the night,
With your unconstraining voice
Still persuade us to rejoice;

With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress;

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.

The church has a more positive duty in higher education than fighting the rear guard action of defending the liberal arts. It speaks the words that liberate the hearts of those who will be the next stewards of this world's people and resources. Perhaps to those, hell-bent for jobs and squint-eyed lest anything untoward enter their field of vision, encouragement must come first of all. It may be the incantation that invites God's spell.

Robert H. Conn is director of annual conference relations and public policy programs, Division of Higher Education, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Notes

1. See, for example, the discussion about actual selections of courses in Zemsky, Robert, *Structure and Coherence* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1989), 10-32.
2. *Chronicle of Higher Education: Almanac*, September 6, 1989, 18.
3. Zemsky, 18, 20.
4. Culler, Jonathon, *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions* (Norman, Oklahoma, and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 26.
5. *A New Vitality in General Education* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1988), 1-3.
6. Auden, W.H., "In Memory of W.B. Yeats," in *W.H. Auden, Selected Poems*, edited by Edward Mendelson (Vintage Books: New York, 1979), 82-83.

What Does QR Mean?

QR means Quality Resource.
Continuing education for your ministry, whether you are ordained, consecrated, or a lay member of the church.

QR means Qualified Reference.
Our writers are at the leading seminaries, churches, and universities in the country.

QR means Quarterly Response.
Four times a year, new perspectives on the Bible, theology, ethics, and pastoral care.

QR means *Quarterly Review*: A Journal of Scholarly Reflection for Ministry.

Please start my subscription to *Quarterly Review* as indicated.

_____ Three years for $33 (Save $12)
_____ Two years for $26 (Save $4)
_____ One year for $15 (Student rate—$12)

Add $2 for postage and handling if outside the continental United States.

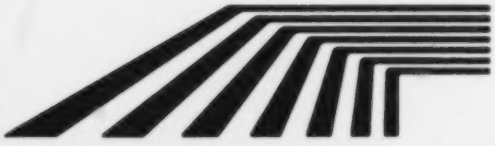
Please make check payable to the Business Manager, *Quarterly Review*, P.O. Box 801, Nashville, TN 37202.

Name: _____
(please print/type)

Address: _____

_____

_____



BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND MINISTRY
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
P.O. BOX 871
NASHVILLE TN 37202

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Nashville, Tennessee
Permit No. 11

DN220036KEC01DNNS01ON
NS CARLA KREPPEIN
ERIC/HIGHER EDUCATION
SUITE 630 ONE DUPONT CR
WASHINGTON, DC 20036